

WEST GERMANY

The Haunted Past

When a couple of young hoods of the tiny, neo-Nazi German Reich Party daubed swastikas on a Cologne synagogue last Christmas Eve, a sort of involuntary twinge stirred memories round the world. Surely not again? The rash of similar incidents that followed, in Germany and abroad, are now on the wane, but at week's end, with a vehemence rare in him, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer went on the air with a remedy for anti-Semites in action: "I say to all my German fellow citizens,

if you catch a ruffian anywhere, execute the punishment on the spot and give him a sound thrashing."

Then Adenauer said: "I turn to my German Jewish fellow citizens and say to them that they can be completely free of worry. This state stands behind them with its entire might. I guarantee this to them."

Adenauer was alarmed by the furor the sick manifestations of anti-Semitism in Germany had stirred abroad, particularly in Britain, and by the criticism that present-day Germany is spreading a "cover of silence" over Nazi misdeeds of 20 years ago while ex-Nazis are turning up in high places, in both East and West German governments. Among prominent officials with a Nazi past in Bonn:

¶ Hans Globke, 61, State Secretary and Adenauer's closest government adviser, was author of the official commentary to Hitler's notorious racist laws of 1935 while an official of the Interior Ministry.

¶ Refugee Minister Theodor Oberlaender, 54, who was a political officer with the Wehrmacht's Nightingale Battalion of pro-German Ukrainian nationalists when they entered Lvov in 1941. Before an international commission in The Hague this month, Oberlaender denied a charge that he ordered the massacre of 2,400 Ukrainians, Poles and Jews at Lvov, declared that the Russians did it before he got there.

¶ Federal Property Minister Hermann Lindrath, 63, was enrolled as a Hitler storm trooper in 1934, a Nazi Party member in 1937.

¶ Interior Minister Gerhard Schroeder, 49, was a Hitler storm trooper in 1933, a Nazi Party member in 1937.

Full Houses. Knock at any door below these topmost levels, and a former Nazi is as likely as not to answer. One in every three present West German M.P.s was once a Nazi, one in every ten East German M.P.s. The Chief Justice of the Communist East German Supreme Court is an old-time Nazi, the head of the Communist East German Academy of State and Legal Sciences a former high-ranking SS officer. Indignantly correcting a critic a few years ago, Chancellor Adenauer said that "only 66%" of the Bonn Foreign Office's senior officials had been Nazi Party members. Perhaps half of all senior civil servants in West German ministries were once Nazis, and the proportion is probably not much less in the East German regime. At least eight West German ambassadors were Nazi Party members. About a third of all German judges were connected in one way or another with the Hitler regime. But, said Chancellor Adenauer last week, the world should recognize that the majority of Germans had served Nazism "only under the hard pressure of dictatorship."

Empty Books. Another pertinent question is whether a new German generation is growing up with a proper knowledge of what went on under Hitler. A West German survey last year showed many schoolchildren with sketchy or distorted ideas ("Hitler did away with unemployment and built the *Autobahnen*"). The ninth-grade textbook used in the most populous West German state deals with the Jewish

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question in a single flat paragraph, without even mentioning the extermination camps in which 4,000,000 Jews were done to death.*

Last week, after a session with Chancellor Adenauer, Interior Minister Schroeder called for "a clear, detailed, standard work on the Nazi regime which can be read and understood by all." But the U.S. Document Center in West Berlin announced that information contained in the millions of cards on file at Nazi Party headquarters (captured in 1945) "is a matter for the German government" and would no longer be made available.

* The paragraph: "The Jews were expelled from the German community. Marriages between German and Jews were outlawed. The Jews were deprived of German citizenship. In 1938 Jew persecutions reached their climax. Synagogues were destroyed, shops were damaged, and the ill-treated Jews were burdened with a 1 billion-mark fine. These Jew pogroms were very damaging to German prestige abroad. In August 1936, Olympic Games were staged in Berlin in an impressive setting. In those days the world abroad was impressed by the organizing skill of the Third Reich."

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